

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----062514 101853Z /43

O 101841Z MAY 78
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1267
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 01881

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, MARR, LE, IS
SUBJECT: UNIFIL: UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL URQUHART'S
CONCERN OVER ARMED INFILTRATION

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1. DURING CONVERSATION WITH AMB. LEONARD ON MAY 9,
UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL URQUHART EXPRESSED HEIGHTENED
CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE UNIFIL CONFRONTATION WITH
PALESTINIANS. (CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE BEFORE NEWS
OF INCIDENT REPORTED USUN 1872.) HE WONDERED WHETHER
A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE PALESTINIANS/LEBANESE
LEFTISTS COULD BE AVOIDED. SPECIFICALLY, URQUHART

MENTIONED A 48-HOUR ULTIMATUM RECEIVED FROM THE PLO BY UNIFIL OVER THE WEEKEND TO THE EFFECT THAT IF THE UN DID NOT ACCEPT THE CAIRO AGREEMENT BUT ATTEMPTED TO PREVENT THE RETURN OF PALESTINIANS TO SOUTH LEBANON, THE PLO WOULD HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO USE FORCE. URQUHART ADDED THAT A FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE RISING TENSIONS WAS A WARNING A DAY OR TWO AGO THAT THE FRENCH BARRACKS WOULD BE ASSAULTED BY 4:00 A.M. UN PROTESTED TO ARAFAT; NO ASSAULT TOOK PLACE. THE SOURCE OF THE WARNING WAS UNCLEAR; THE INFORMATION WAS PROVIDED BY LEBANESE INTELLIGENCE.

2. URQUHART CONTINUED BY NOTING THAT IF SITUATION DID NOT IMPROVE, SECRETARY GENERAL MIGHT HAVE TO CONSIDER SEEKING REAFFIRMATION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE TO STOP AND DISARM INFILTRATORS. HE WOULD EXPLAIN THAT IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH SC ACTION, HE WOULD BE FORCED TO CONSIDER WITHDRAWING THE FORCE. IN URQUHART'S VIEW, PRESENT SITUATION IS UNTENABLE, WITH CONTINUING INFILTRATION AND PLO THREATS TO RETALIATE IF UNIFIL SOLDIERS ATTEMPT TO PREVENT IT. IF EFFECTIVE MEASURES COULD NOT BE TAKEN TO CONTROL PALESTINIANS, HE DID NOT BELIEVE UNIFIL TROOPS SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO RISK THEIR LIVES IN A CONFRONTATION IN WHICH UNIFIL MILITARILY WAS NO MATCH FOR HEAVILY-ARMED OPPONENTS. IF THIS SORT OF "CRUNCH" CAME, HE

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SAW NO ALTERNATIVE TO WITHDRAWAL OF FORCE.

3. LEONARD SHARED URQUHART'S CONCERN BUT RESPONDED THAT DANGERS OF PRESENT SITUATION POSED REAL THREAT TO CREDIBILITY OF UNIFIL AND UN. HE ARGUED THAT GOING TO SC AS SUGGESTED BY URQUHART WAS NOT RPT NOT BEST APPROACH OR NECESSARY AT THIS TIME. IT WOULD INVOLVE MAJOR POLITICAL RISKS AND COULD RESULT IN TRAGEDY FOR LEBANON, ME PEACE, AND FUTURE OF UN PEACEKEEPING. HE COUNSELLED INSTEAD THAT MESSAGE BE CONVEYED TO ARABS QUICKLY AND EMPHATICALLY THAT THEY MUST TAKE ACTION VIS-A-VIS ARAFAT IF THEY DID NOT WISH TO SEE FAILURE OF UNIFIL. IN LIGHT OF FRENCH DIRECT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT TO UNIFIL, LEONARD WONDERED IF THEY MIGHT NOT ALSO BE PREPARED TO HAVE THEIR AMBASSADOR IN BEIRUT MAKE FORCEFUL APPROACH TO ARAFAT. LINE OF ARGUMENT WOULD BE THAT UNIFIL HAS BEEN MANDATED BY THE SC TO "ENSURE THAT ITS AREA OF OPERATION IS NOT UTILIZED FOR HOSTILE ACTIVITIES OF ANY KIND." IN FULFILLING THIS MANDATE IT IS INSTRUCTED TO DISARM ARMED INFILTRATORS. WITHOUT THE FULL COOPERATION OF ALL CONCERNED, UNIFIL'S

EFFECTIVENESS IS SERIOUSLY IMPAIRED AND ITS ABILITY
TO CARRY OUT ITS MANDATE IN ALL RESPECTS IS JEOPARDIZED.
SHOULD SUCH SITUATION DEVELOP THE DANGER OF A WITHDRAWAL
OR OF UNWILLINGNESS OF TROOP CONTRIBUTORS TO
CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE FORCE WOULD BE SERIOUS
POSSIBILITY. THIS WOULD BE DISASTER FOR LEBANON
AND PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST AS A WHOLE, TO SAY NOTHING
OF BLOW TO UN ITSELF.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 USUN NEW YORK 01881

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4. URQUHART TOOK HEART FROM ABOVE REASONING AND
THOUGHT APPROACHES TO ARABS ALONG LINES SUGGESTED

WOULD BE HELPFUL.

5. COMMENT. ABOVE CONVERSATION HAS TO SOME EXTENT
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BEEN OVERTAKEN BY STATE 117862 (NOTAL). IN LINE WITH
DEPT INSTRUCTIONS WE ARE CONVENING A MEETING OF WESTERN
FIVE SC MEMBERS FOR AFTERNOON OF MAY 10 AND PLAN
TENTATIVELY TO ARRANGE FOR EXPANDED FOLLOW-UP MEETING
INCLUDING TROOP CONTRIBUTORS ON MAY 11. WE ALSO PLAN
TO SOUND OUT FRENCH PERMREP ON IDEA OF FRENCH
APPROACH TO ARAFAT IN BEIRUT AND, DEPENDING ON HIS
REACTION, WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO DEPT ON A
POSSIBLE APPROACH TO GOF IN PARIS.

6. THERE IS ONE POINT IN STATE 117862 WITH WHICH
WE CANNOT AGREE. FIRST SENTENCE OF PARA 3 SUGGESTS
THAT UNIFIL MANDATE TO RESTORE INTERNATIONAL PEACE
AND SECURITY IN SOUTHERN LEBANON IS "EXCLUSIVELY
A QUESTION OF HOW TO CONTROL THE PALESTINIANS AND
LEBANESE LEFTISTS THERE." AS FAR AS MISSION IS AWARE,
CHRISTIAN FORCES IN SOUTHERN LEBANON HAVE NOT RECENTLY
INTERFERED WITH UNIFIL OPERATIONS IN LEBANON. ANY
ACTIONS BY THESE FORCES, HOWEVER, THAT WOULD THREATEN
PEACE AND SECURITY OR UNIFIL OPERATIONS CERTAINLY ARE
COVERED BY THE MANDATE. MOREOVER,
THE FACT THAT THEY ARE PRESENT IN SOUTH LEBANON AND
HEAVILY ARMED MAKES THE ARGUMENT THAT IT IS UNIFIL'S
TASK TO DISARM OTHER ELEMENTS MORE DIFFICULT TO
SUSTAIN. AT SOME POINT THIS SITUATION WILL HAVE TO
BE FACED, AND WE SHOULD ANTICIPATE THAT IN OUR DISCUSSIONS
WITH THE ARABS AND EVEN WITH OUR WESTERN ALLIES
THE QUESTION OF "EVENHANDEDNESS" IN THIS RESPECT IS
VERY LIKELY TO BE RAISED. YOUNG

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